

GEORGE A. ROMERO

# EMPIRE OF THE DEAD™

**ACT TWO**

ILLUSTRATED BY  
DALIBOR TALAJIC

**MARVEL**

2 of 5

**PARENTAL  
ADVISORY!  
NOT FOR KIDS!**



# NYC UNDEAD UPDATE!



MAYOR CHANDRAKE



PENNY JONES



PAUL BARNUM



XAVIER

FIVE YEARS AFTER THE DEAD FIRST WALKED, NEW YORK CITY HAS BECOME A FORTRESS OF ISOLATION AGAINST THE UNDEAD PLAGUE VIA THE MILITARISTIC FORCES OF MAYOR CHANDRAKE AND HIS CABAL OF SECRET VAMPIRES!

MEDICAL SCIENTIST PENNY JONES AND ZOMBIE WRANGLER PAUL BARNUM ARE WORKING TO TAME A ZOMBIE (AND FORMER SWAT OFFICER) NAMED XAVIER WHO NOT ONLY EXHIBITS INTELLIGENCE BUT SHOWED COMPASSION, SAVING A STREET URCHIN NAMED JO.

BUT IT'S NOT ALL GOOD NEWS. THERE IS DISSENSION IN THE RANKS AS MAYOR CHANDRAKE'S OWN NEPHEW BILL MAKES MOVES AGAINST HIM, WHILE A BAND OF SOUTHERN REBELS PLAN TO LEAVE THEIR LEADER, DIXIE PEACH, IN THE LURCH AND INVADE NYC EARLY IN A NEWLY DISCOVERED BLIMP! MEANWHILE, TWO WOMEN WERE VICTIMS OF UNSANCTIONED VAMPIRE ATTACKS, ONE IN A BROTHEL, THE OTHER TAKEN TO PENNY'S HOSPITAL, WHERE SHE BEGAN TO EXPERIENCE A STRANGE HUNGER...

NEW YORK REMAINS A DANGEROUS PLACE. BE PREPARED. STAY VIGILANT. AIM FOR THE BRAIN.

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE   
**CITY COUNCIL FOR SECURITY:**

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COLUMBIA HOSPITAL.

DR. JONES,  
DOES SHE HAVE  
TO BE STRAPPED  
IN THIS WAY?

CAN'T TAKE A  
CHANCE ON MELODY  
GOING FOR A SLEEP-  
WALK AGAIN,  
MRS. COOPER.

I DON'T  
UNDERSTAND. HER  
FEVER IS LOWER THAN  
WHEN SHE WAS FIRST  
ADMITTED. SED-RATE, ALSO  
LOWER. CULTURES...BLOOD,  
STOOL, URINE...ALL  
NEGATIVE. SHE SHOULD  
BE IMPROVING!  
BUT...

BUT  
WHAT?

SHE'S  
HEMOLYZING.

WHAT  
DOES THAT  
MEAN?

HER BLOOD  
COUNT IS IMPOSSIBLY  
LOW. HER RED BLOOD  
CELLS SEEM TO BE...  
DESTROYING ONE  
ANOTHER.

WHAT  
COULD BE  
CAUSING  
THAT?

NOTHING  
IN THE  
TEXTBOOKS.

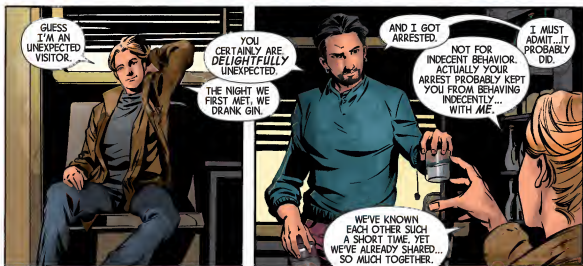
NOT IN...  
COMMONLY  
USED TEXTBOOKS,  
ANYWAY.



BARNUM'S  
OFFICE  
TRAILER.

I NEED  
SOMETHING TO  
RELAX ME, PAUL.  
CAN WE GO TO A  
GIN JOINT  
SOMEWHERE?

WE CAN STAY  
RIGHT HERE IF  
YOU LIKE. I KEEP A  
SUPPLY OF GIN FOR...  
UNEXPECTED  
VISITORS.



GUESS  
I'M AN  
UNEXPECTED  
VISITOR.

YOU  
CERTAINLY ARE.  
*DELIGHTFULLY*  
UNEXPECTED.

THE NIGHT WE  
FIRST MET, WE  
DRANK GIN.

AND I GOT  
ARRESTED.

NOT FOR  
INDECENT BEHAVIOR.  
ACTUALLY YOUR  
ARREST PROBABLY KEPT  
YOU FROM BEHAVING  
INDECENTLY...  
WITH ME.

I MUST  
ADMIT...IT  
PROBABLY DID.

WE'VE KNOWN  
EACH OTHER SUCH  
A SHORT TIME, YET  
WE'VE ALREADY SHARED...  
SO MUCH TOGETHER.



AND THERE'S  
MUCH MORE TO  
COME...I HOPE.

I'VE LEARNED  
NEVER TO THINK  
ABOUT THE FUTURE.  
I'M STRICTLY A...  
ONE-DAY-AT-A-  
TIME KINDA GAL.



WHAT'S SO  
TROUBLING ABOUT  
THIS DAY...THAT MAKES  
YOU COME HERE  
LOOKING FOR A  
DRINK?

I'M FEELING...  
*INADEQUATE.*



REMEMBER I  
TOLD YOU ABOUT  
THE YOUNG WOMAN  
SOME STUDENTS  
BROUGHT IN OFF  
THE STREET?

THE  
ONE WITH  
ALL THE STAB  
WOUNDS?

SHE OUGHT  
TO BE HEALING  
FROM THOSE WOUNDS.  
BUT SHE'S NOT! THERE'S  
SOMETHING WRONG  
WITH HER BLOOD.  
AND I CAN'T  
DECIPHER IT.



HER...  
BLOOD?

HEMOGLOBIN  
CELLS THAT BRING  
OXYGEN INTO THE BLOOD-  
STREAM AND MAKE IT LOOK  
RED. THIS WOMAN'S BLOOD  
LOOKS LIKE *WATER*! HER  
RED CELLS HAVEN'T BEEN  
FUNCTIONING FOR  
DAYS!



WITHOUT  
OXYGEN IN THE BLOOD,  
ANY NORMAL HUMAN BEING  
WOULD EXPIRE. THIS WOMAN  
OUGHT TO BE *DEAD*! BUT  
HER VITAL SIGNS ARE  
NORMAL!

IT'S AS IF,  
I DUNNO, AS IF  
SHE'S TURNING INTO  
A...*VAMPIRE*, OR  
SOMETHING. BUT, OF  
COURSE...THAT'S  
IMPOSSIBLE.

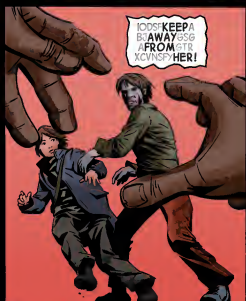


YES,  
*IMPOSSIBLE*.  
THERE ARE...NO  
SUCH THINGS...AS  
VAMPIRES.

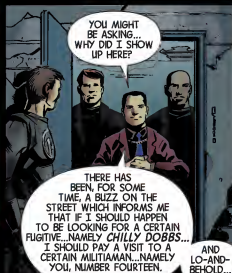
BENEATH THE ARENA.








ISHMAEL'S APARTMENT.







NO ONE HAS  
ANSWERED MY  
QUESTION. I WILL  
POLITELY ANSWER  
YOURS.



THIS...IS WHO I  
AM. YOU DO NOT, AT  
THIS POINT IN TIME, NEED  
TO KNOW ANYTHING  
MORE.

ALLOW ME TO  
ASK YOU ONCE AGAIN...  
**ONCE AGAIN...** MEANING  
THIS IS YOUR LAST CHANCE  
TO ANSWER. **WHO THE  
HELL ARE YOU?**



S'LONG AS  
YOU GOT THEM  
CANNONS POINTED  
AT ME, Y'AIN'T  
GONNA B' LIEVE  
ANYTHING I  
TELL YA, SO...GO  
HEAD AND  
SHOOT.



THEY'RE WITH  
ME. I HAVE REASON  
TO TRUST THEM.

WHAT DO  
YOU WANT,  
RUNYON? WHY  
ARE YOU  
HERE?



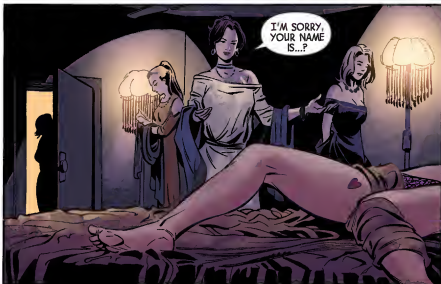
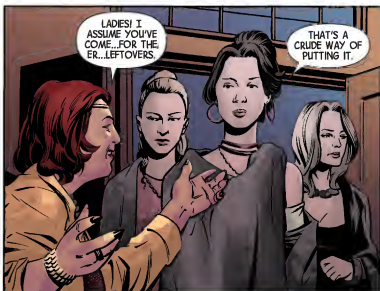
I AM HERE  
TO IMPROVE  
YOUR LIVING  
CONDITIONS. IS  
THERE, SOMEPLACE  
IN THIS DUMP, A  
TELEVISION  
SET?



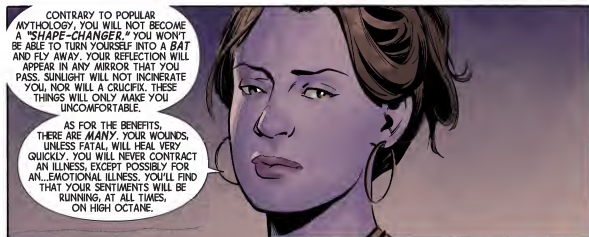
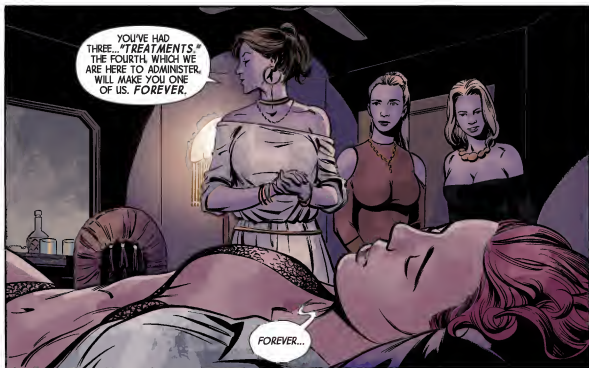




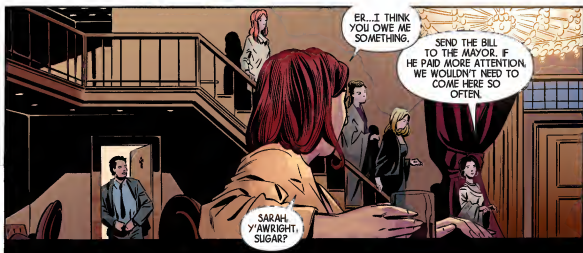
**BUTTERCUP'S  
BROTHEL.**



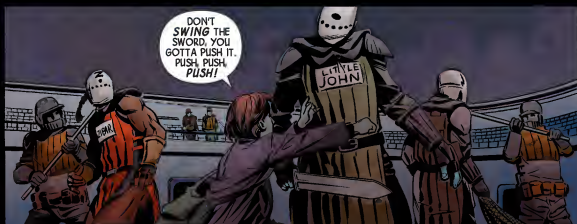








# THE ARENA.

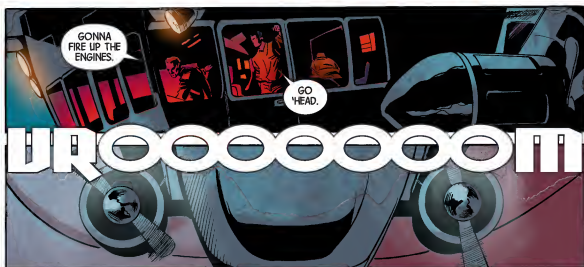
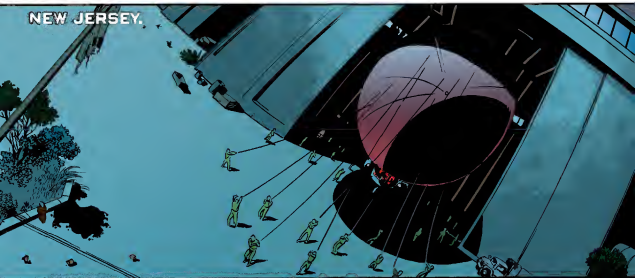








NEW JERSEY.





Y'ALL READY  
TO SERVE UP A FEW  
COCKTAILS?

JEST WAITIN'  
FER Y'ALL TA  
GIMME THE  
WORD, SIR.



I'M FLYIN'  
BLIND HERE. NO  
LIGHTS ON THE GROUND.  
I'M RELYIN' ON  
INSTRUMENTS.

WHAT'S THEM  
INSTRUMENTS  
TELLIN' YA?

THEY'S TELLIN'  
ME THAT WE'RE  
PURTY NEAR...



CORRECTION.  
WE ARE NOT  
PURTY NEAR. WE  
ARE DI-RECTLY  
OVER THE  
TARGET.



SECAUCUS?

SEEE-CAUCUS.  
YESSIR.





FOLIE